



# MBE/DBE/ACDBE Certification Overview

## One certification agency:

1. The Maryland Department of Transportation's Office of Minority Business Enterprise (OMBE) is the official certification agency for the State.

## Two areas of contracting opportunities:

1. Contracts awarded by any Maryland agency and most counties, cities and municipalities.
2. Federal projects with whole or partial funding by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT).

## Three types of certification:

1. Minority Business Enterprise (MBE)  
State-funded contracts
2. Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)  
USDOT projects administered by the Maryland State Highway Administration, Mass Transit Administration and Aviation Administration
3. Airport Concessions Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (ACDBE) Airport concessions contracts administered by Maryland Aviation Administration

## Four steps to Certification:

1. *Application* – Applicant submits completed application and supporting documentation.
2. *Investigation* – OMBE staff reviews documentation submitted by applicant and conducts an on-site/job-site visit during which they interview the applicant.
3. *Evaluation* – MBE Advisory Committee (MBEAC) reviews the investigative report to evaluate whether the firm meets the MBE/DBE/ACDBE program requirements.
4. *Determination* – MBEAC Chairperson issues a written determination.

## Five Eligibility Standards:

1. *Ownership* - Applicant firm must have at least 51% ownership by one or more socially- and economically disadvantaged individual(s).
2. *Minority Status* - Members of certain groups are presumed to be socially disadvantaged:
  - Women
  - African Americans
  - Hispanic Americans
  - Asian Americans
  - American Indians/Native Americans
  - Disabled (*MBE Program only*)

Individuals who are not in a presumptive group must prove social disadvantage to the certifying agency.

3. *Control* - The minority applicants(s) must have an overall understanding of, and managerial and technical competence and experience directly related to, the type of business in which the firm is seeking certification.
4. *Personal Net Worth* - Each minority owner must fall below the personal net worth cap established for the State and federal programs:
  - MBE - \$1,674,928 (*adjusted annually*)
  - DBE - \$1,320,000
  - ACDBE - \$1,320,000
5. *Size* - Applicant firms must meet the small business size standards established by the U.S. Small Business Administration. Size standards are measured by a three-year average of annual gross receipts or number of employees..

For more information about MBE/DBE/ACDBE certification, including MDOT's free monthly *Application Assistance Workshop*, contact the Office of Minority Business Enterprise at:  
[www.mdot.maryland.gov](http://www.mdot.maryland.gov)  
410-865-1269  
[mbe@mdot.state.md.us](mailto:mbe@mdot.state.md.us)